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THE CHICKEN FARMER

The TPP and You: How Canada's Newest Trade Agreement Could Impact Your Farm

On October 5, 2015, Canada's then-Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, the Hon. Ed Fast, signed the Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement (TPP), a trade deal being referred to as the most ambitious free trade deal in history – both in terms of geography and scope.

The 12-country deal (including Australia, Brunei Darussalam, Canada, Chile, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Peru, Singapore, the United States, and Vietnam) addresses a wide range of issues, from agricultural goods to intellectual property rights, investment regulations, rules of origin, labour and environmental standards, and much more.

Canada's new government is currently conducting a thorough review of the TPP agreement, although it is expected by most to eventually ratify it. Although it is possible that the TPP's implementation could begin on January 1, 2017, this ambitious date depends on other countries – most notably the United States and Japan – also officially accepting it; therefore, the actual implementation date remains unknown.

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Chicken Farmers of Canada
Les Producteurs de poulet du Canada

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In signing the TPP agreement, Canada will increase the level of chicken imports allowed in from TPP member countries by a fixed amount that will increase to 23,500,000 after five years and reach 26,745,000 kg per year over 18 years. This new TPP access will be in addition to the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and World Trade Organization (WTO) access, which represent 7.5% of the previous year's production. Adding this TPP amount to Canada's existing import commitments means that by the end of the TPP's implementation, approximately 9.5% of Canada's annual chicken production will be displaced by imports.

On the positive side, the over-quota tariffs, which apply to imports exceeding the committed level of access, have been maintained at their current levels.

SO WHAT DOES THIS MEAN TO YOU AND YOUR FARM?

Well, in recognition of the impact that the TPP will have on producers of supply managed commodities, the outgoing Canadian government announced a number of mitigating measures.

These included long-term, meaningful fixes to end existing practices that have cost the chicken industry thousands of jobs, millions of kilograms in production, and millions of dollars in revenues. Such practices include being able to import unlimited quantities of chicken by simply adding sauce, importing chicken and falsely declaring it as spent fowl in order to avoid import controls, and allowing companies to substitute high-value imported cuts with low-value domestic cuts for re-export.

CFC has been requesting that the Canadian government address these issues for several years, and given that these measures are in no way dependent on the implementation of the TPP, we will be working with the government to ensure that they are put into place as quickly and as effectively as possible. The swift and successful mitigation of these border leakages will go far in terms of recapturing revenues that are already being lost to chicken farmers.

Secondly, the former Canadian government announced that it will be providing the supply management sector with compensation programs to help it transition through the TPP's implementation period. This introduced the Quota Value Guarantee Program, through which it could provide up to $1.5 billion to all supply-managed sectors to guarantee against any reduction in quota value from its 2015 value when it is sold, over the first 10 years of the TPP's implementation. Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada will be developing this program in collaboration with the Farm Products Council of Canada.

There is also, and most directly relevant to you, the Income Guarantee Program that promises $2.4 billion in support to all supply management producers over a 15 year period, approximately $225 million of which will be available to chicken farmers. So, an average chicken farmer can expect to receive approximately $84,100 over this 15 year period, or an average of $5,600 annually before taxes. It is important to note that these payments will vary year to year, gradually increasing over the first five years of the TPP's implementation, and then growing by 1% per year for the following five years before finally tapering down to zero during the final five years of the program. CFC will keep you posted as further details on this program become known.

It is important to note that, at the time of writing, Canada's newly-elected government has not yet indicated whether or when it would ratify the TPP agreement, nor has it reaffirmed that it would honour the outgoing government's proposed mitigation measures. CFC is already working on your behalf to ensure that, should the TPP agreement be signed by our new government, the previous government's proposed mitigating measures are put into action in the most effective manner possible.

Advancing Women

LIFE SKILLS FOR LEADERSHIP – WOMEN IN AG CONFERENCE

Agriculture is rich with successful women, who make important and significant contributions. Recently, a conference series was introduced where women can listen, learn, network, and grow their skills

A Powerful Force for Growth

The goal, each conference, is to bring together over 600 participants and 10+ powerful speakers from across Canada and parts of the U.S. to discuss, share, and collaborate on women's opportunities in the following six areas:

- Leadership development
- Finances
- Career
- Community
- Communication
- Health

Who should attend?

Advancing Women is created for every woman who wants to achieve success in her career, family, community, financial independence and relationships in and outside the workplace. Launched in 2014, the last conference in October welcomed attendees from 130 different organizations from all across Canada, and from several areas of the U.S., to hear 15 speakers.

Speaker Program

Keynote leading speakers make presentations on issues such as:

- **Leadership development** – Effective leadership is a choice. Leaders become great because of their ability to be effective, inspiring and dynamic with personal strengths and people skills.
- **Finances** – All about effective money management tactics, from investing to budgeting, for building and using wealth for greater success.
- **Career** – How to create successful building blocks through goal-setting, networking and leadership skill development.
- **Community** – Tapping into the potential of collaborative and supportive relationships with mentors, coaches, partners and family members, and how to make them part of success in business.
- **Communication** – How to express ideas to different audiences and different generations for optimal impact with communication skills that help lead, inspire and motivate others.

Conferences are held in Calgary and Toronto, and there tends to be 2 or 3 of them per year. For more information on the upcoming conference in Calgary (March 28/29, 2016), visit *www.advancingwomenconference.ca.*

The Canadian System for Wild Bird Avian Influenza Surveillance

North America found itself in a new situation this past year. Three types of highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) appeared, including some novel re-assortments of the virus which contained genes from North American waterfowl. In Canada, HPAI was detected in domestic poultry in B.C. and Ontario, as well as in a wild bird in B.C. In the U.S., domestic poultry were affected in 21 states and there were a number of wild bird HPAI findings.

WHILE ON-FARM BIOSECURITY IS ESSENTIAL TO MINIMIZE THE RISK TO DOMESTIC POULTRY, CANADA ALSO HAS A SYSTEM IN PLACE TO MONITOR THE OCCURRENCE OF AI IN WILD BIRDS.

All of North America is considered vulnerable to exposure during this fall migration because of the previous distribution of the virus and because waterfowl migration patterns will allow populations of birds and virus to mix across the continent and flyways. Therefore, even if the virus is showing up in the Pacific flyway, for example, that doesn't mean it will stay there. While on-farm biosecurity is essential to minimize the risk to domestic poultry, Canada also has a system in place to monitor the occurrence of AI in wild birds.

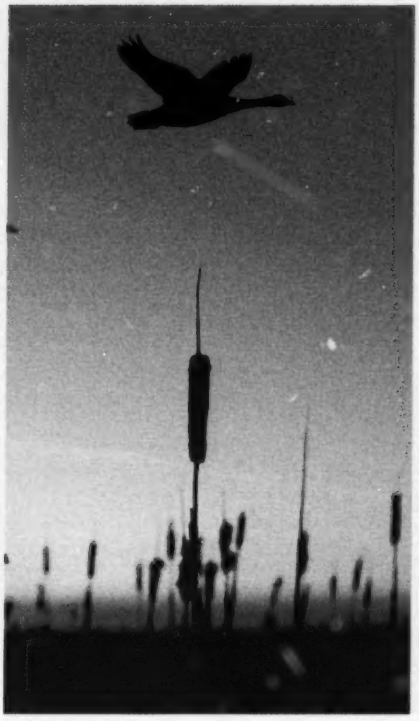
Since 2005 the Inter-Agency Wild Bird Avian Influenza Survey has been undertaken by the governments of Canada and Canada's provinces and territories. The Survey is coordinated by the Canadian Wildlife Health Cooperative (CWHC) in partnership with the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA), Environment Canada, and the Public Health Agency of Canada.

This on-going effort supports Canada's international obligations to report diseases causing significant morbidity or mortality in domestic and wild animals. This includes any 'type A' HPAI as well as low pathogenic H5 or H7 strains, which are considered reportable under the *Health of Animals Act* as well as the OIE Terrestrial Animal Code. The Wild Bird Survey can also help farmers better assess the likelihood of environmental exposure to avian influenza by tracking the locations, timing, and types of virus being shed by waterfowl.

HOW IT WORKS:

Across Canada, provincial networks are in place to collect samples from dead birds for AI testing. Efforts in the fall migration emphasize waterfowl, since they are a primary host of the virus, but birds of prey and unusual occurrences of bird deaths are all considered for AI testing at this time of year. Birds are first checked for evidence of Influenza A (the 'matrix test"). If positive, they are further tested to see if the bird is infected with H5 or H7 strains. Anything positive on that test is referred to the CFIA National Laboratory in Winnipeg to establish the specific type and assess its risk to industry and trade.

The delivery of this national survey varies across the provinces. In some cases, the provincial laboratories arrange the collection and testing of dead birds. In other locations, the CWHC provides this role.



The dead bird surveillance system is supplemented with targeted samples of live birds. Live birds tend to show fewer signs of HPAI, but information from live bird testing has been very helpful for understanding the transmission and evolution of this virus. This year, the national survey is including results of live bird testing from B.C., Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Ontario.

Combined with dead bird testing, the national program will have a larger number and greater distribution of samples to evaluate this year, compared to last. The results of the national survey can be found on the CWHC website (*www.cwhc-rcsf.ca/data_products_aiv.php*). The website is updated every two weeks as results are received from participating labs. By mid-October, of the 2,016 tests reported to the CWHC, there have been 31 H5 and 5 H7 isolates, but no HPAI. These results are not surprising given that the rate of AI infection is known to be higher in wild birds in the fall.

Chicken Farmers of Canada, along with the other national poultry groups, is working with CWHC to look at potential improvements to the current system in order to more rapidly collect, assess, and communicate information about AI risk.

HOW THIS RELATES TO THE RECENT AI OUTBREAKS IN B.C. AND ONTARIO:

When avian influenza is first detected in domestic poultry, initial surveillance efforts are focussed on the farms and birds in close proximity as well as those farms with some link to the infected premise through the movement of people, equipment, or birds. This is to determine if the virus has spread and to try and identify the source of virus introduction to the first flock. In addition to this, wild bird surveillance is enhanced.

In B.C., the CWHC worked with the local wild bird mortality response team on an enhanced surveillance program to establish if the new virus was still present in the environment and to help with determining the source. In this way, wild bird surveillance switched from being passive to an active activity.

Enhanced wild bird surveillance was also implemented in response to the Ontario AI outbreak, and the CWHC regional centre in Guelph led these efforts. CWHC is now working with the CFIA to refine response plans and explore the need to adjust the Canadian wild bird AI survey in light of the new epidemiological situation and past experience in influenza surveillance.

Canadian Poultry Sustainability Symposium and Award

Sustainability is certainly a buzz word that can mean different things to different people. The annual Canadian Poultry Sustainability Symposium is a venue to discuss and explore what it means for the poultry industry in Canada.

The 2nd annual Symposium was held on November 18th in London, Ontario. It featured presentations from four speakers on different aspects of sustainability in the poultry industry.

Cher Mereweather the Executive Director of the Provision Coalition, an industry coalition on sustainability representing 11 provincial and national food and beverage manufacturing associations, spoke about the growing market expectations for sustainably produced food and transparency in agriculture. She touched on the perspective from retail and foodservice companies and what they are looking for in the food they source.

Jenna Griffin, the Industry Development Officer with Egg Farmers of Alberta provided examples on how they have defined sustainability and the tools they have developed for farmers to evaluate their environmental footprint.

Nathan Pelletier, President of Global Ecologic, a sustainability consulting firm, spoke about his work conducting life cycle assessments– a way to measure the environmental impact of a particular food or product accounting for all stages of its production. He discussed their work with Canada's egg farmers and the value of life cycle thinking in its ability to identify which stages of production contribute to a product's environmental impact and the ability to then use that to enhance best management practices.

Robin Horel, President & CEO of the Canadian Poultry and Egg Processors Council, spoke about the perspective of processors, and what they expect in terms of sustainable poultry production.

An overall theme seemed to emerge from the day's discussion in that sustainability can be an all-encompassing term. It doesn't only apply to environmental issues or initiatives. Many groups tend to define it along the lines of 'economically viable, socially responsible, and environmentally sound.' Under this broad theme, Canada's chicken industry can improve upon and promote all the good things we are already doing, not only when it comes to reducing environmental impact, but also taking into account our animal care program, on-farm food safety program, responsible antimicrobial use, and helping local communities and young farmers.

The speakers were followed by a round table discussion titled: *Where do we go from here?* The day concluded with a banquet and the awards presentation to Egg Farmers of Alberta for their sustainability initiatives.

On-farm Euthanasia: Critical for Good Bird Welfare

A new video which walks through the steps for cervical dislocation is now available through the provincial chicken boards.

Produced by the American Association of Avian Pathologists, the video is an excellent refresher for even the most seasoned farmer. Cervical dislocation is practical for on-farm euthanasia and is described as a conditionally acceptable method by the American Veterinary Medical Association – the condition being that it is performed correctly.

Euthanasia is the process of ending the life of an individual animal to eliminate pain and distress. Euthanasia means a good death for the animal.

Euthanasia is an essential part of broiler production both in terms of maintaining flock health (limiting disease spread) and ensuring good welfare by alleviating pain and suffering. It is critical that euthanasia be done correctly, with respect, and in a timely manner. This means that once a sick or injured bird is identified needing euthanasia, it should be performed right away. Euthanasia must only be done by a person who is trained and comfortable with the technique.

CPRC UPDATE

AVIAN INFLUENZA RESEARCH

Avian influenza (AI) is a contagious viral disease that can affect birds including chicken, turkeys, quails and guinea fowl, as well as pet birds and wild birds. AI viruses are caused by the Type A influenza and are divided in two groups based on their ability to cause disease (pathogenicity) in birds.

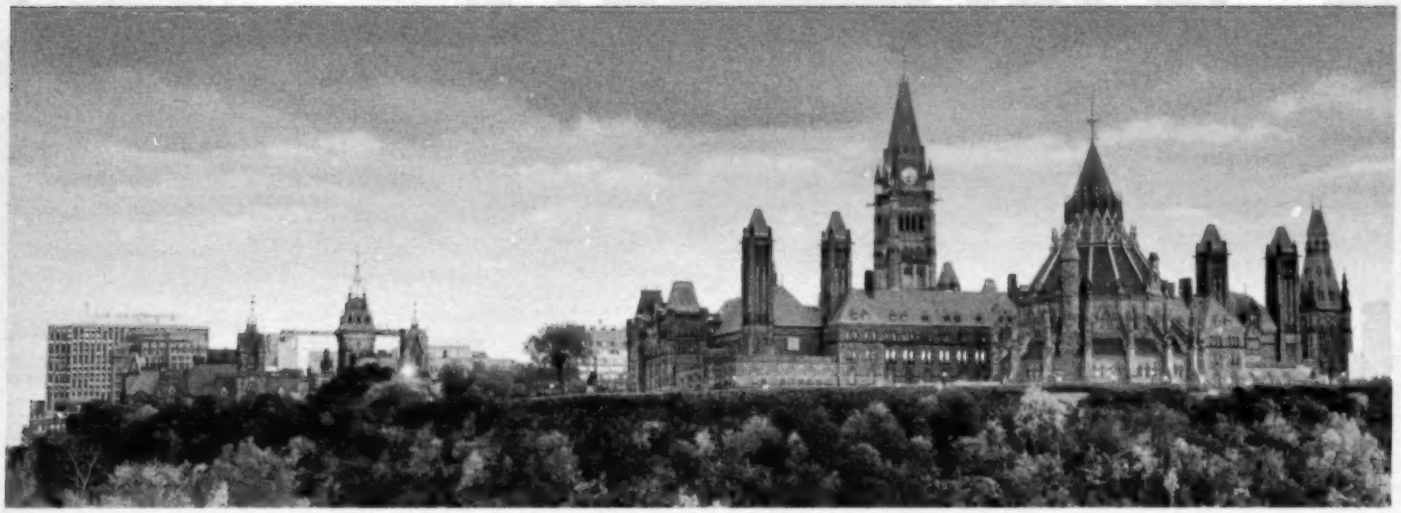
Highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) virus spreads rapidly, may cause serious disease and result in high mortality rates in birds. The low pathogenic avian influenza (LPAI) can cause mild disease that may go undetected or cause no symptoms at all in some species of birds. Various species of wild birds are a natural 'reservoir' for AI viruses, being carriers of the virus without becoming ill.

The H5 and H7 subtypes of the virus are of particular concern, given the ability of these two H-types to mutate from low pathogenic to highly pathogenic after they infect domestic birds. In Canada, highly pathogenic avian influenza and low pathogenicity H5 and H7 avian influenza viruses are considered to be Notifiable Avian Influenza, which is a reportable disease under the *Health of Animals Act*. All cases must be reported to the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA).

CPRC has been funding AI studies since 2006 and has committed almost $520,000 to 11 research projects with total research budgets of more than $2.5 million. This research has looked at a range of issues associated with AI. The issues studied included:

- Identifying the molecular determinants that confer a bird's immunity to the virus and the immune system cells that recognize these determinants. The project was also aimed at determining the dynamics of immune system cells in response to AI virus infection and the genetic pathways that control that response.
- Three related-research projects from the first Poultry Science Cluster investigated adaptation of AI from its natural reservoir in wild fowl to domestic poultry, how avian influenza is transmitted to domestic poultry and the bird's immune response to AI. These projects provided information that is important to developing AI controls and responses.
- AI vaccines are difficult to create because the virus is prone to change that interferes with a vaccine's activity. Researchers investigated the use of RNA interference (RNAi), a natural mechanism present in many animals, including birds, which can decrease the activity of specific cellular genes and has been shown to serve as a natural antiviral response. This research could lead to improvements in a bird's natural immunity.
- An ongoing series of projects have been moving toward development of an effective AI vaccine and delivery system to provide poultry with broad protection delivered efficiently and effectively. This research is being continued in CPRC's second Poultry Science Cluster and has already provided patentable results.
- Present approaches to testing for exposure to avian influenza for the national surveillance program are based on taking blood samples from birds and sending them to a laboratory for analysis. CPRC is supporting research that will evaluate a standardized test to use egg-derived immunoglobin for screening of antibodies to avian influenza to avoid the stress and cost associated with handling birds and taking blood samples.

CPRC and its member organizations (including Chicken Farmers of Canada) will continue to support research on this important threat to Canadian poultry production in its ongoing research activities.



Canada Elects a New Government

On Monday, October 19th, Canadians took to the polls to choose a new government. With the largest voter turnout in over twenty years, Canadians elected the Liberal Party of Canada–led by Justin Trudeau–to form a majority government, with 184 seats out of 338 available in the House of Commons.

The Prime Minister and his appointed cabinet were sworn in on November 4th. Notable portfolios include:

- **Hon. Lawrence MacAulay, MP –** Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food
- **Hon. Chrystia Freeland, MP –** Minister of International Trade
- **Hon. Bill Morneau, MP –** Minister of Finance
- **Hon. Jane Philpott, MP –** Minister of Health
- **Hon. Ralph Goodale, MP –** Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness

Former Prime Minister Stephen Harper has stepped down as leader of the Conservative Party, but will remain the MP for Calgary Heritage. The Hon. Rona Ambrose, from Sturgeon River–Parkland, Alberta, will serve as interim leader until the party goes through a leadership selection process. The Hon. Tom Mulcair will stay on as leader of the New Democrats.

Throughout the lengthy and historic 78-day campaign, we saw many issues arise in debates and across parties, including the conclusion of the Trans-Pacific Partnership negotiations. During the negotiations, the Liberals were unclear about their support of the agreement, but eventually stated they would hold an open and public debate in Parliament to ensure Canadians were consulted on the deal. It is likely that this new government will choose to ratify the deal.

Additionally, in the first 100 days of his mandate, the Prime Minister has committed to tackling some immediate items, ranging from introducing a new tax bracket for annual incomes over $200,000 and reducing the middle class tax bracket, attending the United Nations Conference on Climate Change in Paris with provincial and opposition leaders, to welcoming 25,000 Syrian refugees by the end of the year.

Chicken Farmers of Canada looks forward to working with the government to ensure the voice of our farmers continues to be heard.

To learn more about our government relations please visit: *www.chickenfarmers.ca/for-farmers/.*

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